



Clerk's Report – June

Governance and Administration

Following the resignation of Cllr Hickmore, the Clerk has notified Winchester City Council (Democratic and Electoral Services), published the notice of vacancy on the noticeboard, and updated the Parish Council website. Associated email and social media accounts have been closed.

In relation to councillor email accounts, the Clerk is reviewing a data protection-compliant process for handling historic emails. The proposed approach is to extract and securely retain relevant council business records, with oversight from the Chair or a nominated councillor. Advice is being sought from the auditor to confirm best practice.

The Clerk has also contacted Winchester City Council Housing to clarify whether tenants have any formal rights of access from adjoining properties onto the Parish Council car park and recreation ground.

HR Matters

The Clerk submitted a leave request, which has been approved by the Chair and Vice Chair, for the following dates:

- 7th–11th September (12 hours)
- 28th September–5th October inclusive (15 hours)

Overtime of **6 hours** has been recorded, primarily relating to work on the Annual Audit, including preparation and submission of documentation and responses to audit requirements.

Finance

Annual Audit

Significant work has been undertaken to complete and submit the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and all supporting documentation for the 2025/26 external audit.

This has included preparation of the bank reconciliation, explanation of significant variances (item level) and documentation of actions taken in response to prior year recommendations. The Notice of Public Rights and associated documents have been published in accordance with statutory requirements.

This work has required additional time outside of routine duties.

Budget Position (Q1 to 30 June 2026)

The Quarter 1 Budget Summary has been circulated. The financial position is broadly in line with expectations at this stage of the year:

- Income received totals £21,402.08, representing the first half of the annual precept and £488.08 interest earned.
- Expenditure to date totals £16,534.50 against an annual budget of £80,495.00.

The principal variance relates to tree works expenditure of **£7,150.00** against a budget of **£6,000.00**; this will be met from the Tree Liability Reserve. Other notable expenditure includes play equipment maintenance of **£1,651.32**. Staff and administration costs remain within budget.

Play Area Inspections – Infinity Playground Invoice

The Council requested operational inspections; however, the contractor undertook a maintenance review and issued invoices totalling £600 + VAT. The Clerk challenged this on the basis that the work carried out was not as instructed, and the company has agreed to waive the charges.

A maintenance report has been received and is available for Council to consider any actions arising. The annual inspection report commissioned via Winchester City Council has not yet been received and has been chased.

The contractor has advised that operational inspection costs have increased from £55 to £80 per visit and has proposed an annual package. As the Council currently obtains a more cost-effective annual inspection through Winchester City Council, the Clerk is confirming whether a £80 operational fee is still available without the requirement for the contractor to undertake annual maintenance.

VAT

The Quarter 1 VAT reclaim has been submitted to HMRC and the funds have been deposited into the Unity Current account. This will be reflected in July financial reporting.

Insurance

An additional premium has been paid to extend cover to include the flint wall and railings.

Projects and Parish Matters

Trees and Open Spaces

Progress has continued on ash dieback works, including contractor liaison and site access arrangements. Three trees identified as high risk are scheduled for felling on 13 July 2026. Access has been agreed with the adjoining landowner, and the Sports Club has been informed. A public notice will be issued following the meeting.

Holm Oak

An appeal has been submitted by Sapling Arboriculture, following discussion with the Clerk, to preserve the Council's position and enable further dialogue. The appeal may be withdrawn at no cost should Council wish.

Professional advice indicates that the trees referenced present similar long-term management challenges, with heritage considerations not considered material to the assessment.

Two quotations have been obtained and circulated for the felling and stump grinding of the Holm Oak. These will be reviewed at the next meeting to consider the proposed scope of works prior to seeking a third quotation. Members are invited to consider the position and provide direction.

Pétanque Project

Initial enquiries and benchmarking have been undertaken with other parish councils, including New Alresford and Headley. A draft planning application has

been received from the Boules group and circulated for initial review. A site visit has been requested from PlaySafe (Midhurst) to provide an indicative cost estimate.

Traffic and Highways / SID Funding

The Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) funding application has been updated and submitted requesting £15,000, based on agreed locations. The application is currently on hold pending further discussion regarding final site locations. Ongoing correspondence continues regarding signage and speed management.

Communications and Community Engagement

Updates have been made to the Parish Council website, including statutory notices (AGAR) and grant information. The Small Grants scheme has been promoted via the website and the “We Are West Meon” platform.

The South-Central Ambulance Service has been provided with updated access information for the recreation ground.

The Clerk has also engaged with South Central Ambulance Service regarding Woodlands defibrillator provision, who have suggested meeting with a resident of Woodlands to discuss options to find a central location.

West Meon & Warnford Sports Club has confirmed that the Clanfield girls’ football team has now joined West Meon FC, and the team is named Valiente.

Ref	Area	Task / Topic	RAG Status Green 0-3 months Amber 3-6 Red + 6 months	Progress Status	Updates / Action Needed	Meeting Agenda
12	Village Maintenance	Tree On The Cross: Survey and options appraisal	Amber	In Progress	Jun: Application approved. Sapling Arboriculture, after speaking with the Clerk, submitted an appeal to open discussions about the proposed tree to be planted, to protect the council's position while discussions continue regarding a suitable replacement species. Two quotations have been received for the felling and removal of the Holm Oak, for consideration at the next meeting. A further quote to be sourced by the Clerk. Mar 26: Planning Application received for consideration. Mar 26: Notice of Intent confirmed as 26th January. SDNP Planning confirmed the application was sent to the wrong department. The application has now been given priority, however as the tree has a TPO the application is being sent to Winchester for further investigation. - For earlier entries to this issue, revert to previous Clerks Report.	July
14	Legal	Land Registry: application Status	Red	In Progress	22/10/25: email sent to Bramsdon & Child: Application had stalled pending solicitor action. This has been confirmed as resolved by Bramsdon & Child. Email sent requesting Land Registry reference, confirmation all information is now submitted, and an updated completion timescale. Awaiting response. 3/10/25: Bramsdon & Child confirmed that Land Registry do have the application. Land Registry advised Bramsdon & Child (by letter) to say it could not be expedited through the portal. Bramsdon & Child advise they have not seen the letter. Furthermore Bramsdon & Child claim they have expedited this over the phone (27th August 2025) 27/08/25: Email sent asking for a progress update, reference to the Title Deeds on Land Registry and access to original deeds. 19/8/25: Bramsdon & Child have confirmed they have located the original deeds in their South Sea office. 5/8/25: email sent to all members of Bramsdon & Childs, escalated due to lack of response. 28/7/25: Email sent as no response since previous call. Have asked for the issue to be escalated. June 25: Chaser email sent as application status unclear, so	

					issue remains unresolved (Bramsdon & Childs Solicitors). No response as 5/07/25.	
18	Legal/Property	Legal Advice: Sports Club & Village Hall	Amber	In Progress	Jan 26: see issue 29 for update. - For earlier entries to this issue, revert to previous Clerks Report.	
22	Projects	Woodlands Entry Signs: Confirmation of location	Red	Complete	June 26: third entrance sign installed. April 26: JK Engineering instructed to install 3rd location. Feb 26: There have been no objections received regarding the third location. Jan 26: received from Clerk that Bramdean Parish Council have approved the location and will formally note it in their minutes at the next meeting. Cllr Davies included the 3rd location in the Parish News, as part of the consultation period. Dec 25: a third location for the Woodlands sign has been submitted to the Clerk of Bramdean. This was checked during the Xmas break, and the site looks acceptable, with sufficient space and no obstructions. My only concern is that the location is some distance inside the Bramdean boundary, https://w3w.co/turkey.passively.crystals but will wait to hear back from Bramdean Parish Council, their views. - For earlier entries to this issue, revert to previous Clerks Report.	
23	Projects	Woodlands Fingerpost Signs	Red	In Progress	22/08/25: HH confirmed they are still waiting for a date from contractor who has been assigned the work. 18/08/25: Update requested from Hampshire Highways June 25: Awaiting update from the contractor about timescales. Delayed due to the restructure at HCC. HCC Traffic Dept. will be in touch when more information is available (last response 6th June). - For earlier entries to this issue, revert to previous Clerks Report.	

26	Working Groups	Car Park: Resurfacing and Space Optimisation - 3 quotes	Red	In Progress	Feb 26: meeting was held between Chair of the Village Hall, Cllr Burke, Cllr Fowler and the Clerk to review the proposed changes to the car park. There were no objections received from the Chair. A decision by members is proposed at the meeting to move forward with securing quotes. Nov 25: proposal for works to the car park have been submitted by the Car Park Working Group and circulated for discussion in December meeting. 22.08/25: I have sought quotes for resurfacing the car park and received one quotation with a price to do the initial survey at £6941.00 ex VAT. However, it at this stage may be more appropriate to obtain estimates so that the Council has an indication of likely costs before considering whether to proceed further. Two estimates have been received for discussion in September meeting. 28/7/25: initial enquiry sent out to Nidagraveluk.co.uk, info@slatterestatesurfaces.com, info@randcgroundworks.com and Ed Bagshaw Ltd.	
29	Legal/Property	Leases and Land Ownership	Red	In Progress	June 26: the Clerk contacted HALC Legal Services to ask whether they could recommend any surveyors suitable for the work outlined in the report completed by HALC Legal Services. Response outstanding. Mar 26: Advice letter received from HALC Legal Services setting out their recommendations. To be circulated with Council members and discussed at the next meeting. Mar 26: Advice letter received from HALC Legal Services setting out their recommendations. To be circulated with Council members and discussed at the next meeting. Feb 26: A meeting has been arranged between a representative from HALC Legal Services and the Clerk to review scope and options for progressing matters. The Clerk will report back following the meeting. Jan 26: received response back from HALC Legal Services advisor confirming receipt of the documents and will respond with any questions, noting that the advisor is on limited work time due to a broken arm. Scope of the work	

					to be confirmed in February meeting. DEC 25: Discovery piece is now complete and the document and supporting evidence prepared for HALC Legal Services. The document has been circulated for consideration at the next meeting. Sep 25: see issue 18 update. - For earlier entries to this issue, revert to previous Clerks Report.	
32	Public Rights of Way	Missing Signpost	Amber	In Progress	Jan 26: Fingerpost sign incident still reported as open. 18/08/25: Fingerpost sign reported missing from Drs Lane, location 242/1/1. Reported to Hampshire Country Council reference number 250850735HCC Rights of Way: a job has been issued to Countryside Access Ranger Team - advised this make take some time before it is completed.	
36	Planning	Planning Application	Amber	In Progress	Nov 25: the planning application is still awaiting review. They have a significant backlog, and no timescales are available as to when it will be seen. 22/10/25: progress update requested from Winchester Council on Planning Application SDNP/24/03257/FUL. There has been no response so I have also asked Cllr Wallace if he can assist, as I note he was involved previously.	
41	Finance	Peppercorn Rent	Green	In Progress	Feb 26: response received from Chair of Village Hall. We have now heard back from our lawyer and as we suspected he says that it would not be appropriate for the charity to be charged a peppercorn rent in respect of its occupation and use of the Village Hall. Equally, the charity should not enter into any agreement in this regard. This is because the Village Hall property is held by the Parish Council on trust for the charity and must therefore be made available for the charity accordingly. The payment of a peppercorn rent or use of an agreement would suggest that the charity has some form of tenancy of the property which is not the case. Jan 26: Payment received from the Rifle Club, but they would like to see a Rental Agreement. Dec25: The Chairman of the Village Hall and Rifle Club have both been sent an agreement document to cover	

					unrecovered Peppercorn rents for 2025, with future years to be collected on the 1st of April. This issue was logged by the internal auditor as it needs to be addressed. The Rifle Club is raising this with their committee, and the village hall are raising this with their lawyers, to get advice on potential impact - if any.	
42	Governance	Trust: Recreation Ground: 301982: Removal of Existing Trustees	Amber	In Progress	Nov 25: received in writing formal written notice from the existing trustees that they would like to be removed.	
43	Open Spaces	Ash Dieback	Green	In Progress	June 26: Trees highlighted as being 'at risk' scheduled to be felled Monday 13th July 2026. Clerk received permission for Tree Assist to access the farmland with equipment. The logs previously left behind will be removed, if safe to do whilst the bees are inhabiting the area. April 26: Trees removed, this has highlighted 3 other trees considered at risk. See Clerks note. Mar 26: confirmed dates for the removal of trees identified as 'at risk' is April 13th - 17th April inclusive. Start time between 0800-0900 hours. Partial road closure expected on the Monday or Tuesday. Subject to change e.g. weather conditions may make the ground unsuitable. WM Sports Club advised of the proposed dates.	July
44	Open Spaces	Meonwara - Fencing	Green	In Progress	April 26: Contractor approved at April meeting instructed to carry out the work, as proposed. Mar 26: Three contractors have been invited to assess the condition of the fence at Meonwara Crescent and submit quotations for remedial works. It is anticipated that these will be available for Member consideration at the next meeting.	

45	Legal/Property	Meonwara - Lease Renewal	Green	In Progress	April 26: Winchester City Council have advised that the Heads of Terms have changed from 5 years to 10 years, with the remaining terms unchanged. they have appointed their solicitor to draw up the paperwork that will be sent to the clerk. Mar 26: Winchester City Council has been advised that the Parish Council wishes to renew the lease for a further five-year term on the existing arrangements. Documentation is currently being prepared by their solicitors and will be issued to the Clerk for review. Winchester has been informed that, should the terms remain unchanged, the Parish Council does not intend to instruct a solicitor.	
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